

History is a syringe of vital potion that turns cowards into brave and the brave into martyrs—the pillars of light for the generations that follow.

"It is one of the many sources of wisdom", says Dr. Hardayal. Rig Veda mentions of the mythical Parusha who had thousand heads and a thousand feet, but the student of history has billions and trillions of eyes and ears incorporated into himself all the men and women that have ever lived on this earth.

To commemorate the 200th death anniversary of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia—Sultan-ul-Qaum (king of the Sikh Nation) a solitary distinction then—is a step towards reliving the unforgettable historicity of the life of that legendry Sikh General who from an insignificant orphaned child rose to the height where he was enabled to claim the title of *Padshah* and mint coins in his name; displaying his undisputed regal authority on his triumphant entry into Lahore, Mughal strong-hold, in 1761 leading a legion of the Sikh army and subduing Khwaja Obed Khan.

And the inscription on the coin read:—

*Sikka zad dar jehaan ba-fazal-e-Akaal*

*Mulk Ahmad grift Jassa Kalal*  
(With the grace of the immortal Lord, minted the coin in the Ahmad's country, captured by Jassa Kalal.)

This event has been described in the "History of the Sikhs" (1469-1765) by Prof. Teja Singh and Dr. Ganda Singh as under:

"The Sikhs followed up the victory with promptness and appeared before the walls of Lahore. The leading citizens opened the gates to the triumphant Sardars who, led by Jassa Singh, entered the capital and proclaimed him king with the title of Sultan-ul-Qaum. He coined money in the name of the Guru with the following inscription:—

*Deg a tegh a fateh o nusrat be-dirang*

*Yaafat az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh*"

"The Kettle and the sword (symbol of charity and power), victory and ready patronage have been obtained from Guru Nanak-Guru Gobind Singh."

In fact, this inscription was the replication of Baha Banda Singh Bahadur's seal on his *Hukam Namah*, he issued, dated Poh 12, Sammat 1—12th December, 1710, addressed to the Sikhs of Jaunpur as under:

**One God—Victory to the Presence**

"This is the order of *Sri Sacha Sahib* (the Real Great Master) to the entire Khalsa of

On the occasion of 200th death anniversary :

## Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia

### A Pioneer Sikh-Nation-Builder

By : Giani Brahma Singh, Ajmer

Jaunpur. The Guru will protect you. Call upon the Guru's name. Your lives will be truthful. You are the Khalsa of the great Immortal Lord. On seeing this letter, repair to the presence, wearing five arms. Observe the rules of conduct laid down for the Khalsa. Do not use hhang, tobacco, poppy, wine or any other intoxicants. Do not eat meat, fish or onion. Commit no theft or adultery. We have brought about the Golden Age (*Satya Yuga*). Love one another. This is my wish. He who lives according to the rules of the Khalsa, shall be saved by the Guru.

Sammat 1 was Khalsa Sammat commenced by Baha Banda Singh Bahadur after the Khalsa Army's victory over Sirhind in 1710 A.D.

Bhangoo Ratan Singh, in his *Pracheen Panth Prakash* (pages 203-204), sings of the childhood and life of Jassa Singh and how the exact application of Gurhiani, as under, worked in his life.

*Je raaj bahaaleye iaa Har ghulaam*

*Ghaasee kau Guru Naam kadhaaeyee (M: 4P. 166)*

(If Thou seateth me on the throne, yet I am Thy unwaged servitor. Thou canst even reach a grasscutter to the empyrean glory.)

He narrates:—

*Maangat khaat Khalsay ralia bheya Panth Patshah*

(Begging, stilling hunger here and there, he joined the Sarhat Khalsa and became a king.)

Ahluwalia was a qaum or clan inhabiting the central tracts of Lahore and Kasur in the Punjab (now in Pakistan). There lived a *Guru ka laal*—a Sikh devoted to the Guru. His name was Dayal Singh. He died leaving his spouse and a son, well endearing each other. She was the daughter and daughter-in-law of Sikh parents who equipped her with needed education. She was well versed in the knowledge of Gurbani. She would, along with her son, perform *keertan*, mornings and evenings, in Sikh congregations, on her *Do-Taara*—a two stringed musical instrument. The Sikh Sangats listened to her *keertan* in rapt devotion. In fact, it all opened a door of blissful opportunity for her betterment. It so happened one day Sardar Kapur Singh called the young boy and baptised him with his

pious hands. He equally expressed his wish, sensing the young boy to be promising man, that the boy be given under his care. The mother readily agreed and the boy stayed over with the Khalsa troops.

Sardar Kapur Singh entrusted the lad, now an Amritdhari Sikh, with the duty of feeding the army steeds. Being of tender age and a hit nervous, he came one day to Nawab Kapur Singh, sobbing and complaining that due to misbehaviour of the elderly co-workers he was unable to do justice to his job. Nawab Kapur Singh in his compassionate mood patted the lad on his head and uttered:—

*Ham tau keeno Panth Nabaabay*

*Terayo karoug Patshahi taabay*

(Khalsa Panth hath made me a Nawab. They shall make thee ride a Royalty.)

*Uesi waqat tay bheyo nihaal Shaha kahaeya Jassa Kalaal*

(Thenceforward, he became felicitous Jassa Kalal became to be called a King.)

This rare event of the life of an orphaned boy, is portrayed in "A Short History of the Sikhs", pages 122-123, as under:—

"It was considered very meritorious to receive Baptism *Pahul*—at his (Nawab Kapur Singh) hands. Any word falling casually from his lips was taken up with the reverence due to a superior being. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia once brought a complaint to him that the Sikhs in his camp ridiculed his manner of speech. Having spent his earlier days in Delhi, he had acquired the habit of mixing Urdu words with his Punjabi. The Sikhs ragged him for this and called "*Ham ka tum ka*". Kapur Singh tried to console with the words. Why would you mind what the Khalsa say? They got me Nawabship, and might make you a Padshah.

This incident shows how the Sikhs' imagination was running on sovereignty and whatever they might do and say, the thought making themselves rulers was not far from their minds.

Here young Jassa Singh's service on horse-tending has not been described but there is an oblique indication of his stay at Delhi before he joined the Khalsa troops. Elsewhere it has been narrated that Jassa

Singh and his mother were in Delhi enjoying patronage of Mata Sundriji for over five years and it was only with Mataji's recommendation that they came to the care of Nawab Kapur Singh.

Narang and Hari Ram Gupta in their "History of the Punjab" (1469-1877) relate that Jassa Singh was born in 1718. His father was Badar Singh (Badar-Arabic—full moon) was born Bhangoo gives his name, as earlier stated as Dayal Singh. He came under the fatherly care of Nawab Kapur Singh. He was the founder of Ahluwalia Misl.

### What's a MISL ?

The above authors, on pages 242-243, expound that "Misl is an Arabic word which means "equal" or "alike." According to Sikh religion, all the Sikhs are absolutely equal and hence, in times of peace and all social matters all the members of a particular Misl claimed complete equality, with everyone including the Chief. Of course, the Sardar was obeyed only when there was war but there was no such obligation for the people to obey him beyond that Emergency.

Payen, therefore, says: "As membership of such a Jatha or

group conferred political, religious and social equality on all its members, they began to be designed as "MISLS".

Without any disputation on the superior sense of their determining the import of the controversial term "Misl", I feel, the term is equally a derivative from Arabic word *MUSALSAL*—chained together and *MISAAL*—*Ferman-e-Badshahi*—royal-edict i.e., an assembly or group of militarised persons with no sex discrimination. Here Khalsa come close with one and centralised aim and ideal—here to liberate, by all means feasible or unfeasible, their homeland from Turk hegemony and establish *Paatshahi-Khalsa Raaj*, carrying out and obeying *MASAAL*—the code, dogma, doctrine laid down in the *Misal*, commonly day-to-day used word for English term "file", a contrivance to hold together papers or documents embodying royal-hare Jathedaar's orders or *Hukamnamhas* roving about from department to department.

Thus, to sum up, this peculiar controversial Sikh politico-military term is derivative of

## Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia's political talents, religious zeal and lofty aspirations combined, rendered him one of the most powerful federal Chiefs of the Punjab.

more than one Arabic words—MUSALSAL—chained together, MASAAL—royal edict-fermaan-e-badshahi", Misal—Maanand equal; self-exemplifying and qualifying, and Misal a paper keeping device.

This all is indicative of our great leaders—Khalsa Jeo's superlative wisdom and scholarship in Arabic philology to coin a term which is unparalleled in its inimitability by others till they develop spiritual, political, social, and ethical excellence which the *Khalsa Misaldaars* and members of each Misl had attained.

The political ambitions—*Raj Karega Khalsa*—Khalsa Shall Rule—of the Sikh Misl or the *Sarbat Khalsa* did not contain even with the carving of great principalities by each Misl till one day they succeeded to claim or occupy the coveted Mughal Throne of Delhi in 1783 under the leadership of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, the formidable duo, when on March 11, 1783, a memorable day of the Sikh history, they occupied *Dewan-e-Aam*, when tottering Shab Aalam and his courtiers hid themselves apprehending plunder of the capital by the Khalsa Army in the event of any offensive by the Mughal troops.

Dr. H.R. Gupta and Prof. Narang in their *History of the Punjab (1469-1857)*, page, 249, say: "Up to 1784, Zakrya Khan, the Governor of Lahore, followed the policy of relentless persecution against the Sikhs. But in that year, he tried to win over the Sikhs in a peaceful manner. It was about this time that Jassa Singh was taken into the service of the Lahore Government and for his bravery and courage, he was awarded with rich Jagir of five villages. Later on when Adeena Beg wanted to enlist Sikh troops, Jassa Singh joined Adeena Beg's service, most probably to have a thorough knowledge of the designs of the Muslims against the Sikhs".

The Ramgarhia General, thus, was not expelled from the Punjab but was away from main body of the Khalsa forces for reasons of military strategy.

The learned authors further add, "During the siege of Ram Rauni Fort, Amritsar, in four months (October 1748-January 1749) the besieged (Sikhs) requested Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgarhia for help. Jassa

Singh, deserting Adeena Beg Khan, entered the Fort one night. That act of his strengthened the besieged. Jassa Singh then sent a message to Dewan Kaura Mal, a believer in the religion of Guru Nanak. Kaura Mal persuaded Mir Manu to raise the siege".

"Thus, Jassa Singh saved the Sikhs at one of the most critical juncture and, consequently, Sikhs handed him the Fort of Ram Rauni in reward of his services. It was rebuilt and renamed Ramgarh by him, and the Misl took the name from that Fort."

Further keeping in view the depiction as above, and his characteristic readiness to serve the Khalsa Brotherhood, Mr. Bhatia's dubbing General Jassa Singh Ramgarhia as pioneer disseuter, is equally divested of reality. He was co-occupant of *Dewan-e-Aam*, the seat of Mughal suzerainty, and in witness of the victory, "he carried away four guns and a large variegated slab of stone. This beautiful slab can still be seen in the Ramgarhia Bunga, Amritsar. It is a large slab 6 X 4 X 3/4 feet in dimensions."

Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was the founder of the Ahluwalia Misl, one of the 12 Sikh confederacies. He led Sikh bands against Mohammadan chief while yet under 20 years of age.

When Nawab Kapur Singh became old, he wanted to give the handobast of the Khalsa to a young man and his eyes fell on

promising Jassa Singh. Accordingly when *Sarbat Khalsa* met on *Baisakhi*—March 29th, 1748 at Amritsar, he, in that great assembly placed Jassa Singh in a supreme command of the Sikh Forces i.e., *Dal Khalsa*.

According to Sir Lepal Grifins, Kapur Singh was, as long he lived, the first of Sikh Sardars, though Jassa Singh has obtained more than lion's share of the fame. When Kapur Singh was dying, he made over to Jassa Singh the steel mace of the last Guru—Guru Gobind Singh, thus appointing him as it were to his influence which Jassa Singh by his ability and courage considerably increased. This mace is said to be kept in *Tosha Khana*, safe custody, of Kapurbala.

Jassa Singh suffered heavy defeat at *Kup-Wadda Ghallughara* (Grand Holocaust) in 1762, during Ahmad Sbah Abdaali's invasion of the Punjab. He recovered rapidly and in the following year he, along with other Sardars, attacked Sirhind, defeated and killed its governor, Zain Khan. The number of Sikhs, men, women and children killed, leave apart maimed, is still the point of indecision with our Sikh or non-Sikh historians. Some say 10,000 and some go to the figure of 30,000. I am sure even with big researchers in our universities, this point will remain undecided for good. Let me see.

Jassa Singh died in 1783 in Amritsar where a monument in his memory still stands in the Dehra Baha Atal beside the samadhi of Nawab Kapur Singh. He was a tolerant ruler, yet did not permit the Muslims to kill cows. Twice he made expeditions to punish cow-killers; once at Kasur and once at Lahore.

Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia had no son and his cousin, Bhag Singh, succeeded him. On the latter's death, his son, Fateh Singh occupied the throne and made friendship with Maharaja Ranjit Singh and in token thereof they exchanged turbans. On Fateh Singh's death in 1837, his son, Nihal Singh, succeeded him. The descendants of Nihal Singh ruled Kapurbala for over a century till it was integrated with other Sikh states to form PEPSU in 1948.

Many more exploitations in the fields of religious as well as political activities go to his credit like rebuilding of Sikh Hari Mandir—Golden Temple after it had been mercilessly demolished by Abdali and freeing of large number of Hindu and Sikh women captives from the clutches of Muslim invaders and escorting them to their homes.

Such were the unforgettable heroes of Guru Gobind Singh's Khalsa in whose glory we now bask and do little to keep it alive. It has every justification to commemorate such centenaries, not relegating the other Misaldaars of parallel fame into oblivion.

### Surjit Singh Minhas to Court Arrest

Sardar Surjit Singh Minhas, Advocate, former Chairman of Jullundur Improvement Trust, will lead a big jatha of Akali volunteers for courting arrest in Shiromani Akali Dal's *Dharam Yudh Morcha* at Amritsar on October 23.

The jatha would start from Sardar Minhas' village Daroli Kalan (Adampur Doaba) after offering prayer in village's historic Gurdwara of Baba Mati Ji. It would reach Jullundur via Adampur. The second batch of volunteers would start from Bhogpur and reach Jullundur's Gurdwara Dewan Asthan where in a huge congregation Sardar Parkash Singh Badal, former Punjab Chief Minister; Sardar Surjit Singh Barnala, Sardar Balwant Singh, former Punjab Finance Minister; Jathedar Ujagar Singh Sekhwan, MLA and other prominent Akali leaders would bid send off to the jatha. It would court arrest at Amritsar on the same day.

It may be mentioned that Sardar Surjit Singh Minhas had been in the jail thrice previously too in the present Morcha. There is great enthusiasm amongst the student community too to join the jatha as Sardar Minhas has been the President of the All India Sikh Student's Federation.

